

Gambling

In today's modern society there are many ways to gamble. The casino, pokies, horses, greyhounds and online are just a few examples.

Compulsive gambling or gambling addiction occurs when a person continues to gamble despite the increasing amount of negative consequences.

Examples are:

- Lying or other dishonest behaviours which are out of character (such as cheating or stealing)
- Financial pressure
- Bankruptcy
- Anxiety/depression
- Relationship pressure
- Loss of relationships
- Fraud or embezzlement

As a result of these things the gambler experiences guilt, shame, remorse, anger, resentment and fear which can lead to ongoing anxiety and depression.

You may have a gambling problem if you:

- Feel the need to be secretive about your gambling. You might gamble in secret or lie about how much you gamble, feeling others won't understand or that you will surprise them with a big win.
- Have trouble controlling your gambling. Once you start gambling, can you walk away? Or are you compelled to gamble until you've spent your last dollar, upping your bets in a bid to win lost money back?
- Gamble even when you don't have the money. A red flag is when you are getting more and more desperate to recoup your losses. You may gamble until you've spent your last dollar, and then move on to money you don't have - money to pay bills, credit cards, or things for your children. You may feel pushed to borrow, sell, or even steal things for gambling money. It's a vicious cycle. You may sincerely believe that gambling more money is the only way to win lost money back. But it only puts you further and further in the hole.
- Family and friends are worried about you. Denial keeps problem gambling going. If friends and family are worried, listen to them carefully. Take a hard look at how gambling is affecting your life. It's not a sign of weakness to ask for help. Many older gamblers are reluctant to reach out to their adult children if they've gambled away their inheritance. But it's never too late to make changes for the better.